

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 NIC-01 ACDA-19 AID-20 CIAE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SCCT-02 OMB-01 SY-04 CU-05

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 DRC-01 /167 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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INFO USCINCSO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 6741

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, AR

SUBJECT: MONTONEROS DECLARE WAR

REF BA 6735

1. SUMMARY. WITHIN HOURS AFTER THE GOA CLOSED THE PUBLICATION "LA CAUSA PERONISTA", MARIO FIRMENICH, THE LEADER OF THE MONTONEROS, HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE THAT HIS ORGANIZATION HAD RETURNED TO ARMED STRUGGLE AND WOULD RESUME USE OF THE GUERRILLA TACTICS THEY HAD USED AGAINST THE MILITARY GOVERNMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE MAGAZINE "LA CAUSA PERONISTA" HAS BECOME THE EIGHT PUBLICATIONCLOSED BY THE GOA SINCE THE PERONISTS RETURNED TO POWER. THE GOA DECREE CLOSING THE PUBLICATION WAS ISSUED ON SEP 6 AND WAS A REACTION TO THE PROVOCATION AND CONTROVERSY CAUSED BY RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLE ON THE MURDER OF FORMER PRESIDENT ARAMBURU (SEE REFTTEL). THE DECREE ALSO INSTRUCTED THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE TO BEGIN LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THE
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EDITORS AND OTHERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLICATION.

3. WITHIN HOURS OF THE CLOSURE, MARIO FIRMENICH CALLED A PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE THAT HIS ORGANIZATION, THE MONTONEROS, WAS GOING UNDERGROUND AND WOULD RETURN TO ARMED STRUGGLE. THE "NEW STAGE OF RESISTANCE", HE AVERRED, WILL BE USED UNTIL REPRESSION IS ELIMINATED, UNION DEMOCRACY EXISTS, THE SOCIAL PACT IS SCRAPPED, POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE FREED AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION RESTORED. FIRMENICH ADMITTED THAT THE MONTONEROS HAD ALREADY BEGUN TO ONCE AGAIN USE GUERRILLA TACTICS, INCLUDING THE RECENT MURDER OF TWO POLICEMEN, A KIDNAPPING AND SEVERAL BOMBINGS.

4. AT FIRMENICH'S SIDE DURING THE PRESS CONFERENCE WERE THE LEADERS OF THE OTHER GROUPS WHICH COMPOSE THE SO CALLED "REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY"--JUAN CARLOS DANTE GULLO OF THE PERONIST YOUTH REGION I (JP), PABLO VENTURA OF THE PERONIST UNIVERSITY YOUTH (JUP), ENRIQUE JUAREZ OF THE PERONIST WORKER YOUTH (JTP) AND ADRIANA LESGART OF THE EVITA GROUP. THESE GROUPS, ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT GIVEN, "WILL ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THIS STAGE OF THE POPULAR RESISTANCE AND WILL CLOSE ALL THEIR LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICES". LEADERS OF THESE GROUPS LATER POINTED OUT THAT THEY ARE NOT GOING UNDERGROUND. WHILE THEY RESPECT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MONTONEROS, IT IS A MILITARY ORGANIZATION WHILE THEY ARE POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS.

5. IN A RELATED INCIDENT ON SEP 7 THE APARTMENT OF RAUL LAGUZZI, THE LEFTIST PERONIST WHO IS INTERIM RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES, WAS BOMBED. HIS FOUR MONTH OLD SON WAS KILLED AS A RESULT OF THE EXPLOSION (SEE SEPTTEL).

6. THE GOA HAS BEEN HOLDING HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS OVER THE WEEKEND BUT HAS NOT YET REACTED TO MONTONEROS' STATEMENT.

7. COMMENT. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MONTONEROS WANTED AN EXCUSE TO ANNOUNCE THEIR CHANGE OF TACTICS. THEY HAD PROBABLY HOPED THE GOVT WOULD DECLARE THEM ILLEGAL. IT IS SOMEWHAT IRONIC THAT THE GUERRILLA GROUP THAT USED VIOLENCE TO PRESSURE THE MILITARY TO ALLOW PERON TO RETURN FROM EXILE IS USING THE SAME TACTIC AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS WIFE. FIRMENICH WARNED THAT THOSE WHO WANT TO STAY IN THE MIDDLE SHOULD

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STEP TO THE SIDE WHEN THE WAR STARTS. THE EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES HAVE OFTEN DEMONSTRATED THEY ARE NOT VERY DISCRIMINATING WHEN IT COMES TO PICKING TARGETS. NO BETTER EXAMPLE OF THIS IS THE DEATH OF LAGUZZI'S SON. THE VIRTUAL DECLARATION OF WAR ON THE PART OF THE MONTONEROS PROBABLY SIGNALS A NEW STAGE IN ARGENTINA'S PAROXYSM OF VIOLENCE, FOR THE MONTONEROS, UNLIKE THE ERP, DO HAVE SOME POPULAR SUPPORT--ALBEIT LIMITED. THEIR ARMED OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT, THEN, ADDS A NEW DIMENSION

TO THE PROBLEM.

8. THE INCREASED TEMPO OF TERRORISM AND THE BELLICOSE POSTURE OF THE MONTONEROS COME AS NO SURPRISE. MOST OBSERVERS HAD PREDICTED THIS WOULD FOLLOW IN THE WAKE OF PERON'S DEATH. NOW THAT IT IS UPON US, IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE PARALLEL PREDICTION THAT DESPITE THE VIOLENCE, THE CENTRIST FORCES (MOST PERONISTS, THE UCR AND MOST OTHER PARTIES, THE MILITARY, THE LABOR UNIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY) CAN WEATHER THE STORM IF THEY CAN STICK TOGETHER. WHETHER THEY CAN OR NOT IS OPEN TO QUESTION. CERTAINLY IT WILL NOT BE EASY, AS BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT WILL DO THEIR BEST TO RIP THE CENTER CONSENSUS APART. CLEARLY, FOR EXAMPLE, THE OBJECTIVE OF THE EXTREME LEFT IS TO GOAD THE GOVERNMENT TO OVERREACT AND THUS ALIENATE THE PUBLIC.

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